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# Using Rubrics for Information Literacy Skill Assessment: A Case Study for Business Education

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# Using Rubrics for Information Literacy Skill Assessment: A Case Study for Business Education

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## ABSTRACT

Information literacy—the ability to find, evaluate and use information effectively—is an essential skill set. The authors examine how assignments such as case analyses and research reports help business students master these abilities and provide examples of how analytic rubrics with measurable outcomes are particularly suited to assessing these skills. Also demonstrated is how librarians enhance and support student learning of information literacy by teaching in-depth research skills. Working together, professors and librarians can give students a solid foundation in the information-handling skills they need to be effective and productive in the workplace today.

## KEYWORDS

- Information Literacy
- Rubrics
- Assessment
- Library Research
- Business Education

## WHY INFORMATION LITERACY?

### Information Literacy in the Workplace Context

- The U.S. Department of Labor identified five competencies necessary to meet the challenges of today's (i.e., 1992) workforce; information literacy is one of them
- Endorsed by UNESCO in 2003, at its meeting in Prague: "Towards an Information Literate Society"
- Economic factors:
  - 2001 International Data Corporation (IDC) article revealed that this delay [be information literate] could cost a Fortune 500 company \$5.3 million a year in the United States (
  - In 2007 Saulles' study showed that small- and medium-sized businesses in the United Kingdom wasted over £3.7 billion because of inefficient use of the Internet as a research tool.

## DEFINITION

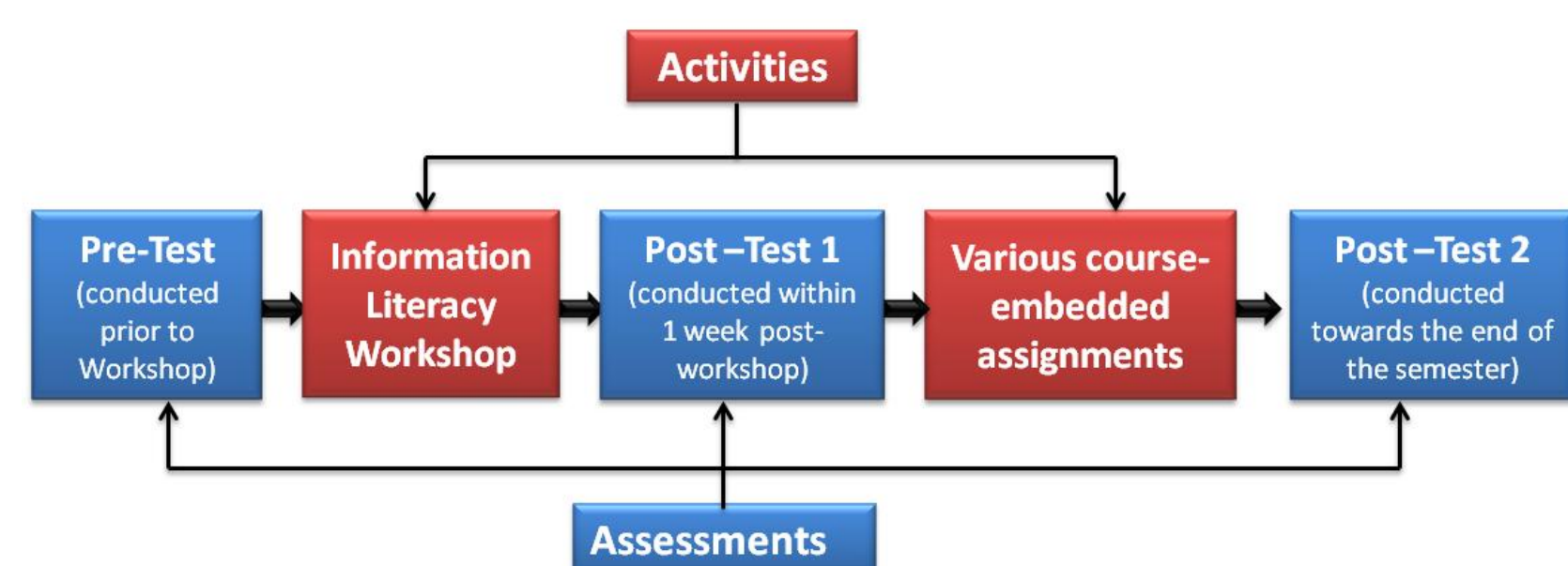
As defined by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (n.d.), students who are information literate are able to:

1. Determine the extent of information needed
2. Access the needed information
3. Evaluate information and its sources critically
4. Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
5. Access and use information ethically and legally

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

To measure students' information literacy competency skills following a library instruction session where they were taught how to properly conduct research.

## METHODOLOGY



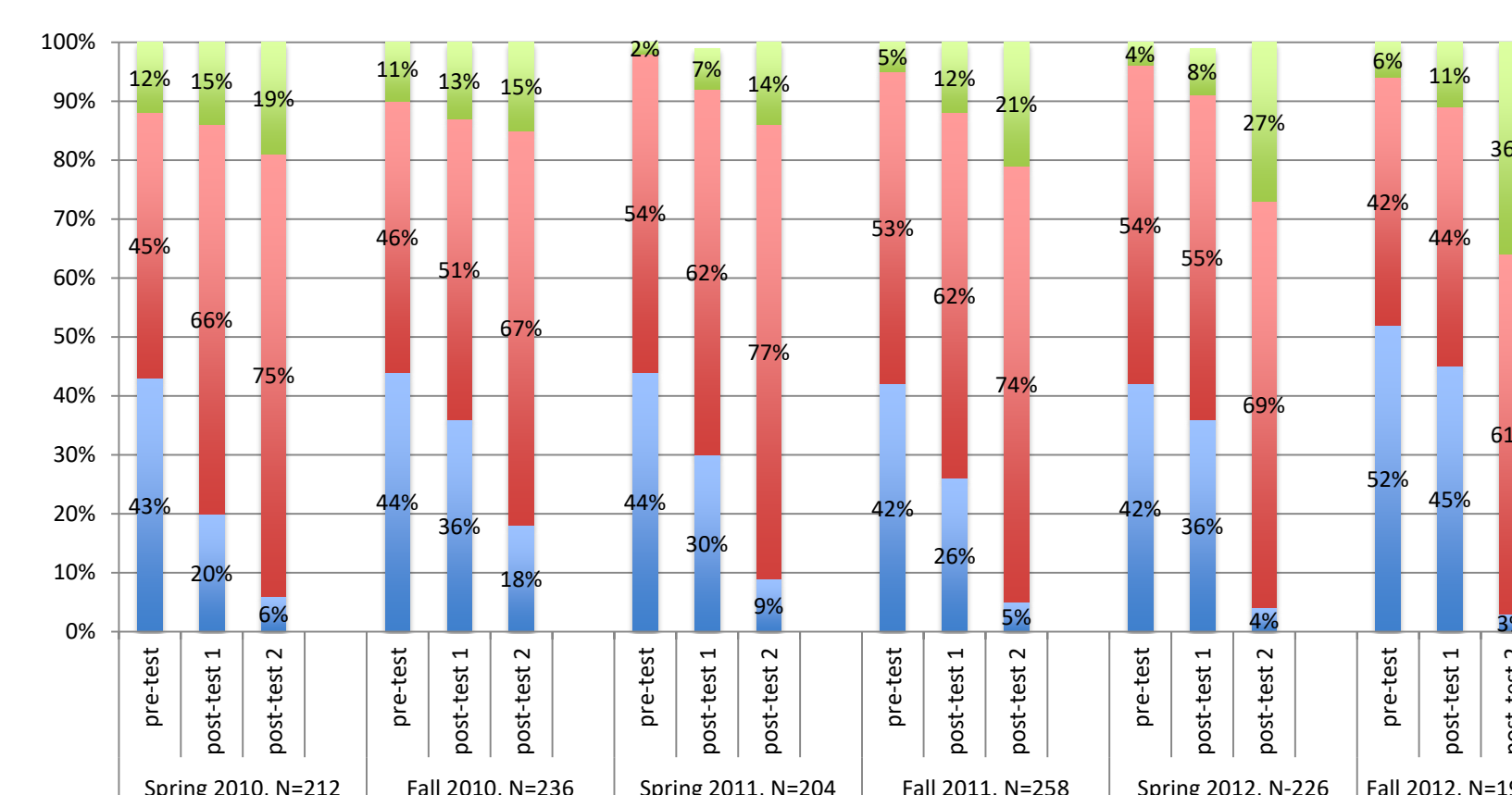
This research was conducted over a 3-year period with one pre-test prior to the library Information Literacy workshop; 1<sup>st</sup> post-test was one week after and 2<sup>nd</sup> post-test was before the end of the semester.

## STUDENT INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS

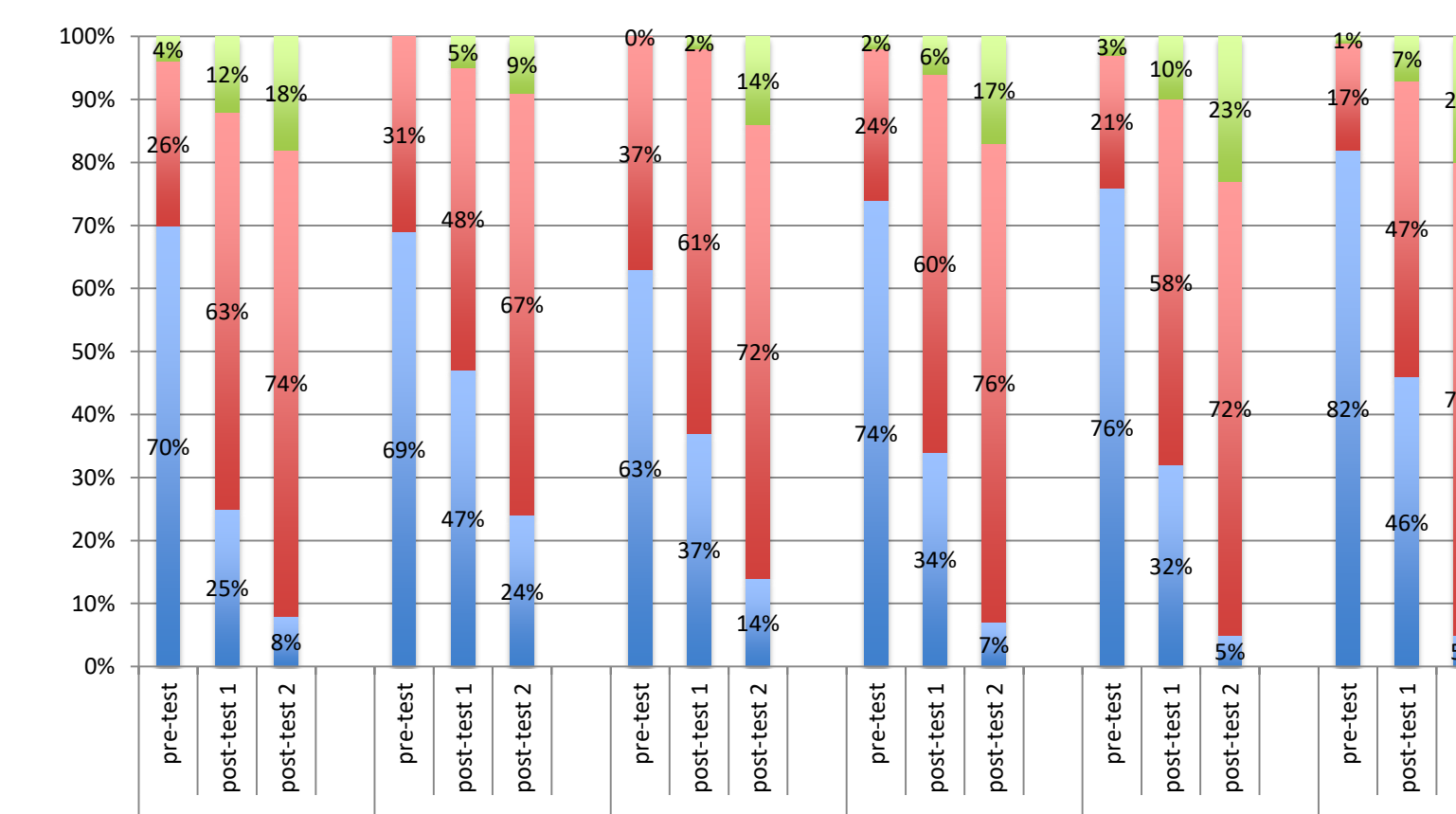
Three critical information literacy skills were measured: communication; ethical use and citation of sources; and critical thinking, analysis and evaluation of data. Students' information literacy competency skills were classified into: beginning, proficient, and advanced, based on their performances on these skills, using rubrics from AAC&U.

## RESULTS

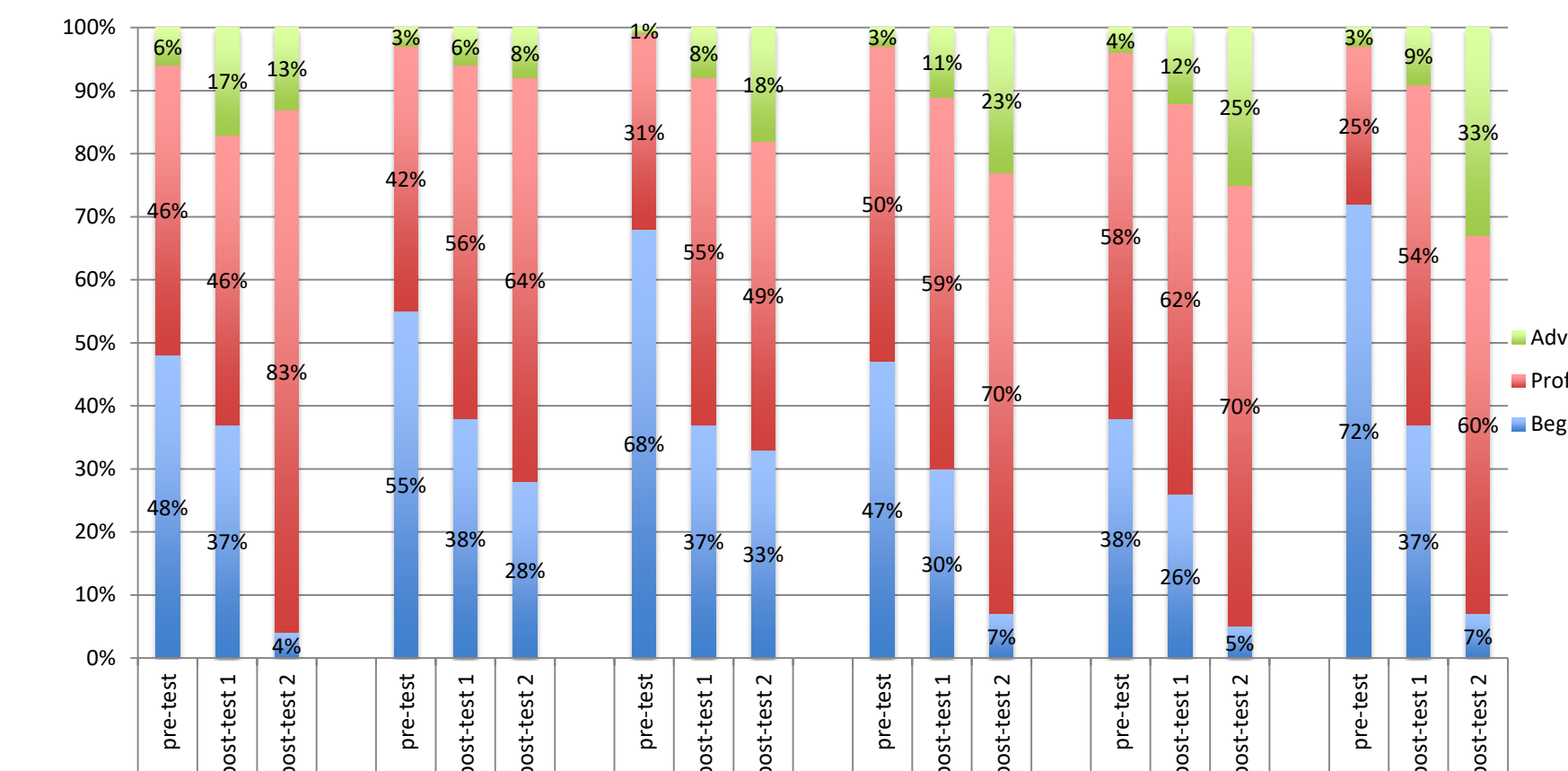
Skill 1: Communication of Ideas



Skill 2: Ethical Use and Citation of Sources



Skill 3: Critical Thinking, Analysis and Evaluation of Data



## DISCUSSION

The results of the three-year research suggests that the learning model adopted to develop information literacy skills among students is promising. In general, the results across the three-year study are consistent in showing that a majority of the students who went through the program exhibited an improvement in their skills from beginning to proficient and advanced by the time the 2<sup>nd</sup> post-tests were conducted.

**Skill 1: Communication of ideas**, in Fall 2012, the students still in beginning level at the 2<sup>nd</sup> post-test dropped to as low as 3% of the population. In the same semester, there 36% of the students who are at the advanced level.

**Skill 2: Ethical use and citation of sources**, in Fall 2012, although the students at the beginning level at the 2<sup>nd</sup> post-test was at 5%, majority of the students (75%) were in the proficient level.

**Skill 3: Critical thinking, analysis and evaluation of data**, in Fall 2012, students still in the beginning level at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> post-test was at 7%, and about 60% were in the proficient level.

## NEXT STEPS

Moving forward, additional demographic data such as GPA, grades from previous relevant courses, and age range can be collected at the time of the pre-test to provide context to the benchmark grade that students receive. This background will allow the instructor to redesign assignments as necessary to help students hone their information literacy skills. Assessing critical thinking is especially challenging, and restructuring assignments to better measure this skill is a work in progress.